

SECONDARY EDUCATION MODERNIZATION PROGRAM

(TT-0023)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BORROWER: The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

EXECUTING AGENCY: Ministry of Education (MOE)

AMOUNT AND SOURCE: IDB: US\$105.0 million (OC)
Local counterpart funding: US\$ 45.0 million
Total: US\$150.0 million

FINANCIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Amortization period: 25 years
Disbursement period: 7 years
Interest rate: variable
Inspection and supervision: 1%
Credit fee: 0.75%
Currency: U.S. dollars from the single currency facility

OBJECTIVES: The overall objective of the Secondary Education Modernization Program (SEMP) is to support MOE efforts to reform and expand the secondary subsector. The outcome of this effort will enable the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) to: (a) universalize five years of equitable, high-quality secondary education; (b) transform educational content and teaching methodologies to meet the needs of a modern, skills-based economy; and (c) develop a more efficient management of resources, while strengthening sectoral managerial capacity at the central, regional, and local levels.

DESCRIPTION: The Program is divided into four articulated components:

1. Improved educational equity and quality (US\$32.2 million). This component will finance: (a) development and validation of a new secondary curriculum in five "core" areas in each of Forms 1-5; (b) gradual phasing out of specialized craft technical and vocational education and training (TVET) from the secondary level; (c) a pilot reading program; (d) introduction of an array of instructional resources (media, information

technologies, and print) targeted to support new kinds of teaching and learning; (e) establishment of a textbook lending program targeted to low-income children; (f) establishment of a magnet school program to promote excellence and innovation; (g) a robust program for the professional development of teachers, principals, and central MOE staff; and (h) standardized testing and assessment measures integrated with the key learning objectives. These new methods, content, and learning materials, will be supported by a systematic process of formative evaluation and monitoring to ensure that key learning targets and implementation benchmarks are achieved. The new secondary program will be gradually introduced in a phased sequence over seven years. A National Certificate of Secondary Education Examination, will be established to certify student attainment of essential "skills and competencies" required for the workplace.

2. Deshifting, rehabilitation and upgrading of school infrastructure (US\$67.6 million). This component will finance the targeted expansion of secondary coverage, and the provision of universal access in five and seven-year secondary schools. It will facilitate quality improvement through the provision of an enabling learning environment, deshifting, and the consequent lengthening of the school day for students by up to 1 1/2 hours. Major activities include: (a) targeted provision of approximately 10,000 new secondary places through the construction, furnishing, and equipping of an estimated 18 new general five-year schools; (b) construction of two new secondary schools to replace existing dilapidated structures; (c) installation of computer laboratories in all 100 existing secondary schools; (d) upgrading of science labs in all secondary schools; (e) limited rehabilitation related to the conversion of existing junior and senior secondary schools; (f) establishment and operation of a computerized school maintenance system; and (g) incentives for the participation of Denominational School Boards in the expansion of the secondary system.
3. Institutional Strengthening (US\$7.5 million). This component will strengthen the MOE's institutional capacity to plan, monitor, and manage secondary education, and the SEMP in particular. It will finance: (a) development of a critical mass of management and operational capacity at all levels within the MOE; (b) new management, information, and administrative systems and processes applied at all levels; (c)

further decentralization of the MOE, including the establishment of four Regional Education Districts (REDs) and the separation of strategic and operational functions and responsibilities at the central, regional, and school levels; (d) school-based management and the establishment of school boards; (e) overall planning and management of the change process; (f) incentives for the improved performance of teachers and students; (g) delinkage of teachers' remuneration from the rest of the civil service; and (h) the establishment of a new teacher remuneration structure.

4. Studies and measures for improved sector performance (US\$1.5 million). This component will lay the groundwork for further policy reform over the short, medium, and long term. Initiatives to be explored and implemented over the short term include: (a) support for MOE strategic planning; and (b) an economic study of the rates of return to education in Trinidad and Tobago. Strategies to be analyzed over the medium and long term include: (a) expansion of post-fifth form "A Level" coverage; (b) enhancement of educational services to children with special needs; and (c) rationalization of the MOE's role in the provision of technical/vocational education, as well as the transition from school to work.

An additional US\$15.7 million has been included in the program for operation of the SEMP Coordination Unit (US\$7.0 million), and for unallocated expenditures (US\$8.7 million).

**THE BANK'S
COUNTRY AND
SECTOR STRATEGY:**

The SEMP is consistent with the Bank's lending strategy for Trinidad and Tobago, which includes support for sustained economic growth and diversification, reduced unemployment and poverty, and an efficient and enabling public sector. The SEMP will increase the development of human capital by extending coverage and improving the effectiveness of mainstream secondary education. The educational status of the poor will be improved by increasing access and equity at the secondary level. Institutional strengthening and decentralization efforts will improve the quality and efficiency of the MOE's services.

**ENVIRONMENTAL/
SOCIAL REVIEW:**

The proposed project will enable the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to respond to the broad social demand for five continuous years of equitable secondary education for all. It will have an impact on the secondary school-age populations in marginalized urban areas and in poor rural regions.

The program will introduce measures to improve educational equity and quality, and support the targeted expansion of general secondary schools.

The SEMP will require some new construction, school rehabilitation, and the adaptation of existing school infrastructure to meet quality and access objectives.

To the greatest extent possible, the project will use existing infrastructure more intensively. Where new construction is required, it will be carried out in accordance with the norms established by the Educational Facilities Unit (EFU) of the MOE, and inspected by a qualified EFU engineer prior to acceptance by the education authorities. No adverse long-term environmental impact is envisaged.

BENEFITS:

Economic impact. The proposed program will contribute to the creation of the base of skills essential to sustaining the country's economic growth in the next century. That growth will require a more technically and managerially-skilled population, with tertiary education or post-secondary training increasingly becoming the norm. The SEMP aspires to produce, across the entire population, the basic intellectual skills needed for such later, employment-related, education and training.

Social equity impact. SEMP's emphasis on social equity will benefit all segments of the secondary school-age population, notably those only now marginally served or excluded. The project will mitigate the relative impact of limited access and inequitable provision through the targeted expansion of secondary coverage to low-income groups with the greatest levels of unsatisfied demand, the provision of compensatory programs to achieve equity targets, and the unification of secondary streams under a five-year single-shift core program. This will be achieved through the construction of 20 new schools to facilitate universal secondary coverage, up from the current rate of 69%, and the provision of single-shift education to approximately 35% of the secondary enrollment now attending junior secondary schools. All 100 existing secondary schools, teachers, and students will benefit from the improved curriculum, upgraded science labs and libraries, and the installation of multi-media learning centers. The program will make it possible for the first time, for all citizens to aspire to the many opportunities for which secondary education is a pre-requisite.

External efficiency. External efficiency will be enhanced by improving the quality of education and student learning. The transfer of formal technical education to the post-secondary level will ensure a higher quality of education and a stronger link to

specific labor demands. These quality improvements, coupled with expanded coverage, are particularly important given the country's prospects for economic development, and should result in secondary school graduates who are better equipped to compete in the labor market as well as for university places.

Stakeholder ownership. The breadth of stakeholder involvement during the design process for the SEMP has contributed to a broad and unusually detailed understanding of the strategies and actions to be undertaken, together with a strong sense of unanimity around them. Each project component was supervised and approved by the cognizant Ministry official. The Ministry's leadership not only provided overall guidance and direction, but was intimately involved at every step. Such open engagement and true ownership of the program on behalf of Trinidad and Tobago has resulted in the development of a tightly integrated reform strategy which has the full support of the MOE, has been embraced as part of the political platform of the Government, and responds to the public's demand for equity and access.

RISKS:

Complexity of Execution. A risk of any tightly integrated program lies in the complexity of its execution. The existing management capacity within the MOE is severely affected not only by a shortage of qualified professional staff, but also by a lack of efficient information and administrative systems. Although detailed implementation plans were carefully designed for each component during project preparation, successful execution will require strong managerial and technical capabilities, a fully operational monitoring and evaluation system, and an institutional capacity for change and renewal. The SEMP has developed specific lines of action to overcome these risks.

Incentives to improve the quality of teaching. Perhaps the most delicate reform involves the delinkage of teachers' remuneration from the rest of the civil service, and the establishment of a performance appraisal system with appropriate incentives for teachers and school administrators. The Bank recognizes the sensitivity of the issue and supports the GORTT's commitment to implement policies that would attract and maintain the highest possible quality of teachers. In particular, the SEMP will contribute to improved efficiency in resource management through the introduction of incentives to: stimulate teacher performance, encourage skills upgrading, link remuneration with output and initiative, support school-based management and school boards, and establish an effective school supervision and performance appraisal system. The

SEMP will also support MOE policy considerations through the analysis of career stream expansion and an incentive-based remuneration structure for teachers. Together, these measures should result in improved educational quality; greater efficiency, and increased accountability.

**SPECIAL
CONTRACTUAL
CONDITIONS:**

1. Conditions precedent to first disbursement:

The executing agency shall present (a) the SEMP Implementation Manual. (See 3.11)

2. Conditions precedent for disbursements for:

- a. Investments in Tobago, a signed Memorandum of Understanding between the executing agency and the Tobago House of Assembly (THA). (See 3.11)
- b. Denominational Schools, a signed agreement between the executing agency and the denominational boards participating in the program. (See 3.11)

3. Conditions during execution: (Periods of time are counted from the day of first disbursement.)

- a. Within six months: 16 key posts filled within the MOE; 12 posts filled in the SEMP Coordination Unit; 6 international experts contracted. (See 3.7)
- b. By the end of Year 1: Cabinet approval of MOE plan for reorganization and decentralization to REDs, including school-based management activities. (See 2.46)
- c. By the end of Year 2: (i) textbooks procured and distributed to all eight pilot secondary schools. (See 2.15); (ii) removal of the Common Entrance Examination. (See 2.28); and (iii) substantial progress towards implementation of MOE reorganization and delegation of responsibility to REDs and schools boards established. (See 2.46)
- d. By the end of Year 3: (i) Textbooks distributed to all participating schools. (See 2.15). (ii) MOE functional decentralization completed (new organizational chart approved and REDs operational). (See 2.46); and (iii) Government decision on delinked structure for teacher remuneration and incentives. (See 2.48)

- e. By the end of Year 4: Appropriate MOE financial and budgetary structure, and transfer and reporting mechanisms in place to effectively implement REDs and school-based management completed. (See 2.46)
- f. By the end of Year 5: MOE reorganization completed. (See 2.46)

4. Other conditions:

- a. Retroactive recognition of expenses up to US\$1.0 million; chargeable to the local contribution. (See 3.23)
- b. Ex-post evaluation: Will be financed and conducted by the GORTT between twelve and eighteen months after project completion. (See 3.28)
- c. Audits: Will be prepared by an independent accountancy firm. (See 3.31)

POVERTY TARGETING: Although not poverty targeted, this operation qualifies as a social equity/poverty reduction project, as described in the indicative targets mandated by the Bank's Eight Replenishment.

EXCEPTIONS TO BANK POLICY: None.

PROCUREMENT: The limits over which international competitive bidding will be used for the procurement of this project are: US\$250,000 for goods and US\$1.5 million for civil works. For limits below those established in paragraph 3.16, prior Bank review of documents will be required for the first three procurement cycles for all categories of local competitive bidding. Once SEMP has demonstrated that effective procurement procedures have been established, local procurement will be further reviewed on an ex-post basis under Bank guidelines. (See 3.19)